

**SPECIAL MEETING
BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN
(PUBLIC PARTICIPATION)**

October 16, 2001

7:00 PM

Mayor Baines called the meeting to order.

Mayor Baines called for the Pledge of Allegiance, this function being led by Alderman Vaillancourt.

A moment of silent prayer was observed.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Alderman Wihby, Gatsas, Levasseur, Sysyn, Pinard, O'Neil, Lopez, Shea, Vaillancourt, Pariseau, Cashin, Thibault and Hirschmann

Mayor Baines advised that the purpose of the special meeting is to give residents of Manchester the opportunity to address the Board on items of concern affecting the community; that each person will be given only one opportunity to speak; that comments shall be limited to two minutes to allow all participants the opportunity to speak and any comments must be directed to the Chair.

Mayor Baines requested that any resident wishing to speak come forward to the nearest microphone, clearly state their name and address when recognized, and give their comments.

John Trisciani, 320 Laydon Street, Manchester stated:

I have been a commissioner for the last year for the Manchester Transit Authority. This thing has gone long enough, far enough and it is time something is going to get done before somebody gets hurt. This is an example of what I have been through in a year; the first meeting I attended as a commissioner after I was sworn in, when we went into Executive Session I was served papers that I was a conflict of interest. That is how I started and it has been getting worse and worse. I have tried hard to work with the commissioners that are there. I thank the Lord for Harry Tentas...that is the only support I get. I spent the meeting here two weeks ago out front trying to break up the raucous. So it is time something has to be done. I have a ton of letters so there is no need to be going through all the letters. But the biggest thing that bothers me is the school bus drivers. I have been here and sat at meetings

where everything is fine at MTA...they are not. When you have forty-six people leave the job; they are not leaving because they are going for better jobs at all. This list came from MTA. I sat here, you people asked for it, the answer you got was we have to look into it. I was at two School Board meetings, same answer was given. I went down there, it was guaranteed that I was going to get it as soon as possible; I waited ten days. Finally I went down to get it. The list they gave me has thirty-three names on it. We have people who have been there for years. They are not leaving for better jobs. There is not any better job out there than driving a school bus where you can bring your kids on and secure them and drive. But the drivers are out there under such stress that it is unbelievable. I was in Concord yesterday when the football team should have been there at 4:00; they never showed up until five minutes to 4:00. It is time something has to be done before somebody gets hurt.

Alderman Wihby asked as a conflict of interest; who served you what papers.

Mr. Trisciani replied the letter was written from our attorney to the general manager. The general manager served it on me because one of the commissioners who is in a conflict of interest as anybody is had him do it.

Mayor Baines asked but it was declared that you did not have a conflict.

Mr. Trisciani replied I do not think you people would have sent me down there if I was in a conflict of interest.

Alida Hunnewell, 733 Grove Street, Manchester stated:

I have been employed at the Manchester Transit Authority as a school bus driver since February 7, 2000. I would like to take this opportunity to express my feelings about working for the MTA. Contrary to statements that were made at the last Aldermanic meeting, everybody is not happy with the management team. Just to give you a few figures, since August 28, 2001 to this date eighteen school bus operators have left. Not all drivers have left for full-time positions with other companies regardless of what the management team would have you believe. They still retaliate and use power and control against all employees. There is a total of sixty-two school bus operators, twenty-five transit operators and seven maintenance employees at this point in time. We have been coming to these chambers for three long years. We understand you cannot fire the management team only our commissioners can. However, you as fathers of this fine city can appoint the proper team of commissioners to work towards the best interest of our company. You succeeded in that endeavor by appointing John Trisciani as a commissioner, however, we need more commissioners like him in order to have the transit authority function as it should. In conclusion, the management team at the transit authority have built a wall between employees and themselves. In 1989, the Berlin Wall was destroyed would it not be great if we could tear down our wall in the year 2001.

Joanne Ulbin, 321 Pinebrook Place, Manchester stated:

I have been employed by the Manchester Transit Authority for six years. I started out as a school bus operator. I am presently the lead dispatcher. I work with school and transit drivers. It was either at an Aldermanic meeting or a CIP sub-committee meeting where employees of the MTA were once again allowed three minutes to speak before the board and publicly humiliate and criticize the managers of the MTA. After one of the public floggings, a manager of this board stated how astounded he was that there was no one speaking in favor of the MTA. I would like to do that now. There are over one hundred employees who work at the MTA and how many employees do you see here tonight or any other night. It is much easier for the employees to come before this board and criticize the goings on at the MTA because they can go back the following day with no aftermath. Many have been quite proud of what they have said. On the hand, if employees did come before this board and speak in favor of management, their union brothers and sisters can make life very difficult. Maybe life is too short, maybe it would make people's lives more difficult to speak in front of this board. This could be a rough crowd and they harbor a lot of hate for John Webster and Don Clay. I think that there are really great people at the MTA. However, we really do need to work together and when we do work together we can make it a great place to be.

Don Gosselin, 24 Kilby Street, Manchester stated:

I have been employed with MTA for the last twenty-five years. I have been a union representative for approximately sixteen of that last twenty-eight years working on the executive board. My concern is we have come before this board for the last three years on three separate occasions and asked for assistance in the areas that we have concerning MTA which you are well aware of. I think you have seen MTA management before you and you have seen how they present themselves before this committee. I believe you have seen the citizens of Manchester come before you with their concerns of the transit system. And you have seen the employees come before you with their concerns with the transit system. This is all falling into place for the last four years since the new management team was put into place. Let me just mention the fact that when they were hired to those positions, they were hired with very limited managerial skills. John Webster was a bus driver. He drove a bus for seventeen or twenty years. Although he worked with the union secretary treasurer he was very limited in administration skills. Don Clay was superintendent of maintenance. There is a very small group of maintenance employees maybe eight or ten employees there. I believe as general manager, he was very limited in his skills as a general manager. They were given a shot we were told at that time to see what they could do for MTA. I believe we have seen...at least we feel as employees and citizens what they have done for MTA and for the City of Manchester. We ask you again tonight, would you please consider putting on an active commissioner, a bipartisan commissioner, one commissioner who would look at all concerns of MTA so we can turn this around and get this moving in the right direction for the City of Manchester so we have a good transit system as we did at one time. Again, we certainly need another commission who is active and bipartisan who will help look at all areas.

Larry Gammell, 177 Stark Way, Manchester stated:

I addressed you about two weeks ago as the chairman of the Positive Approach Committee at the MTA. Tonight I would like to speak on behalf of the other employees like myself at the MTA who are happy with what we do there and the positive changes which our company is making. Sorry to say that we do not speak as loud as the discontented but we are here whether in person or on television. We are upset about the overthrow of this company. We have had a commissioner and a disloyal manager working very hard to “stir the pot” with discontented employees. They come to the rescue and offer management changes as a solution. Naturally, the manager that is currently orchestrating all of this from home would be the new manager. People like myself, who have been loyal to this company and its leadership would be disposed of. What a shame it is at this time for the MTA. I feel like the very top levels of leadership, the commissioner himself and the one who hired me have abandoned me and others like me who work there. They do not want to know why we like what we do or why we are contented with what we have. They only want to meet with the discontented. None of them have even talked with me. The ones who cry the loudest I believe you are going to hear from some of these tonight...I want you to know that some of us at the MTA do not feel the same way. We respect the rights of our other fellow employees but we also disagree. I thank you for hearing from our silent group tonight.

Patricia Stamaszyk, 207 Eastern Avenue, Manchester stated:

I am just here to let everybody know why I no longer work for the MTA. I started working there February 14, 1997. It was not until probably this past year that there started being some extremely major problems with management. They are saying that it is just the drivers that are having problems, it is not. Management has problems too. We have one part of management that has been out on stress for the past six and a half months. She has not worked due to stress related illnesses due to that place. My last day of work I was parking my bus...I was done with my route, John Webster came out and says to me “You need to go back to West.” which I was not at West I do not do the West High run...it was another driver’s run. West High students paying students you need to go out there and pick those kids up. They need to be brought home. So I simply let them know that there was four busses at Alpha-Bits Daycare that could have easily been there in less than five minutes time and he said, “I do not care how many busses are sitting there because there could be an empty sitting right at West High School I really do not care because I am sitting there telling you to do it and you are the one going to be doing it and that is all there is.” He said, “I do not care how many busses are sitting there.” It is just dumb, stupid things like that that he does to people.

Billy Dodd, 181 Mammoth Road, Manchester stated:

First of all, my condolences to Alderman Clancy’s family. He was a first-class individual and will be missed. A couple of things tonight...stop “twitching” your thumbs and priorities. If you can work a deal for Courthouse Square LLC surely you can speed up the process for a

senior center at Derryfield Park. After all, it is for recreational purposes...the seniors' recreational purposes. You are wasting your most valuable resource...time. Also, we know at the site on Hanover Street, across from the Eastside Plaza is unsuitable because it is unstable. It used to be a peat moss bog. Nothing will ever be built there...forget it. The site where the tennis courts are is okay. Hackett Hill...Bills on Second Reading that meeting was postponed and I do not know what their recommendation is on the Hackett Hill property that we brought in those nineteen acres. But if they want to play "hardball" on the rezoning issues versus conservation land then "let's play"...do not "buckle down" to them. Revisit the original zoning change on the majority of their land when it was done for the zoning changes for the whole city. After all, that was part of the original negotiations that the EPA asked you guys to participate in. Shaw's on South Willow Street...ditto...do not put a road down the railroad bed. Even on Elm Street the Civic Center...it is nice that the drains have been fixed while the rest of the city waits to have theirs fixed. If Alderman Clancy was sitting there he would ask you, "Where are your priorities?" And the last thing is redistricting...I ask all individuals in Manchester to vote against redistricting in November because it was not done fairly. It was done for political favoritism. Thank you.

Elizabeth Jefferson, 31 Crockett Drive, Goffstown stated:

I drive for the Manchester Transit Authority. I was not prepared to speak tonight but I would like to address something that was brought up by Joanne Ulbin and Larry Gammell. You have never seen me before because I have never been here "screaming my head off" but I am here to stand behind the drivers who have to endure that. I have dealt with management personally. I have written my letters, I have gotten letters back and we have kept it within the management realm. However, it has not changed anything. It got so bad that I had to send subsequent letters when my words were "twisted" against me. I gave Commissioner Trisciani a copy of all those letters. We do not all "wash our laundry" in public. We do in fact try to deal with management as personably as we can. But sometimes it does not work that way. I am all for a positive approach committee but the union members down there want their contract to be honored. How can you feel positive about any committee if your contract is not being honored. If you have management or a particular manager who is using your words against you or knows the contacts so well that he can interpret it his own way. It is very uncomfortable for us. Like I said, in this hall right now I do not know how many are here but I would love all those drivers who are here to please stand up. They do not have to clap...please just stand up and identify yourselves by standing. Because there are a lot of us here. This is not something that is just out here in the open that we are talking about because we want to cause management trouble. There is a problem in there and the problem has to be resolved. And before I can feel positive about a positive approach committee I have to have my contract honored. Thank you for your time.

There being no one further wishing to speak, on motion of Alderman Pariseau, duly seconded by Alderman Shea, it was voted to take all comments under advisement and further to receive and file any written documentation presented.

There being no further business to come before the special meeting, on motion of Alderman Pariseau, duly seconded by Alderman Pinard, it was voted to adjourn.

A True Record. Attest.

City Clerk